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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, our help in ages past and hope for years to come, we honor Your Name. Bless our lawmakers with Your peace, freeing them from anxieties and fears as You give them wisdom to be strong and courageous. As they trust in the unfolding of Your powerful providence, direct their steps.

Lord, fill their darkness with light, their sorrow with joy, their mistakes with forgiveness, and their doubts with certainty. Hasten the day when justice will roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PROTECTING OLDER WORKERS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today is the 10th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision in *Gross v. FBL Financial Services*.

The Court ruled that employees who face age discrimination have to meet a higher standard of proof than workers

who face discrimination based on any other factor. This case involving Iowan Jack Gross affected employment discrimination litigation across the entire country, and sent the message to employers that age discrimination is OK.

I hope the Senate acts on the Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act to correct this injustice and restore fairness to our Nation's senior workforce. I happen to be the sponsor of that legislation.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, for years American administrations of both parties have properly labeled Iran as the world's most active state sponsor of terrorism. This assessment is based on the cold hard facts of Tehran's behavior.

Iran's support for terrorism knows few bounds, sectarian or geographic. Iran has provided support to Sunni, Shia, and secular terrorists. It has conducted or sponsored attacks around the world, including a plot right here in Washington, during the Obama administration, to blow up a local restaurant and kill the Saudi Ambassador to the United States.

We know that Tehran is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan—Americans murdered by Iran's proxies. So while it should be shocking that Iran is now conducting more attacks against civilian shipping vessels in international waters, unfortunately, it really isn't all that shocking. This is the kind of behavior we have witnessed over the years.

Until recently, the United States spent years failing to hold Iran suffi-

ciently accountable for its terrorism, proxies, and "gray zone" tactics. Tehran was emboldened to tread all over international law.

Now things are different, and Iran's corrupt, moribund economy is feeling the pressure of U.S. sanctions. So it is not surprising that the mullahs now resort to their favorite tool—violence.

The President has said he does not seek conflict with Iran, and neither does the Senate. Nevertheless, the risks of a conflict are real. But make no mistake. They are being driven by Tehran's decision to resort to violence, and that includes what the Secretary of State has described as a "blatant assault" on international shipping, threatening the freedom of navigation in international waters.

Tehran must not be rewarded for terror and intimidation. The United States and our partners need to stand firm and apply concerted, coordinated diplomatic and economic pressure until Tehran changes its behavior.

Acting Secretary Shanahan, at the request of his military commanders, has ordered additional forces to the Middle East for purposes of defense and deterrence. As he made clear when announcing this deployment, the United States does not seek conflict with Iran.

I support these prudent efforts to respond to Iranian intimidation. Defensive military deployments will help us to protect American interests in the region and deter Iranian aggression. I encourage the administration to continue working closely with our partners across the globe to encourage Iran's leaders to cease their aggression.

I hope Iran's leaders will listen to the demands of their people, who continue to protest against the stifling authoritarianism of the Islamic Republic for a better, more prosperous, more peaceful life.

I also appreciate the administration's efforts to keep Congress apprised of the latest intelligence, deployments, and

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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